

Lepidoptera observed in Lanzarote during February 2000

Between 10 and 17 February 2000, I spent a holiday based at the Hotel Beatriz just inland from Costa Tegui, on the east coast of the island of Lanzarote, during which time only five species of butterfly were seen. However, for two, *Danaus plexippus* (L.) and *Cacyreus marshalli* (Butler), my observations appear to represent the first reported sightings from Lanzarote. Neither are included in publications such as Owen (1988, *Ent. Rec.* **100**: 259-260) or Baldwin (1991, *Ent. Rec.* **103**: 79-81).

A single adult *D. plexippus* was seen in the grounds of the Hotel Melias Salinas in Costa Tegui town on 11 February. This example may well have been a stray from the neighbouring island of Fuerteventura, where it has been reported by Owen (1992, *Ent. Gaz.* **43**: 87-92), though even there Owen considered that it may not be a permanent resident. Alternatively the Lanzarote example could have originated from further afield, such as from Madeira, where it known to be established. It would seem doubtful that this striking species is resident in Lanzarote. The acknowledged larval food plant was not seen during my stay and it is hardly likely to have been overlooked by previous observers. However, Owen (*loc.cit.*) reports that larvae of the related *Danaus chrysippus* (L.) feed on the cactus-like milkweed *Carraluma burchardii* on the neighbouring island of Fuerteventura; this plant also occurs in the northern half of Lanzarote.

Cacyreus marshalli is probably established on the island and is presumably a recent arrival. Two adults were seen flying around a planted *Pelargonium* sp. within the grounds of the Hotel Beatriz on 15 February, and closer examination revealed a few empty pupal cases, presumed to be of this species, on walls adjacent to other flower beds containing *Pelargonium* within the hotel grounds. The spread of this South African species and its association with planted *Pelargonium* is well known, especially in the Mediterranean area, e.g. Reid (1998, *Ent. Gaz.* **49**: 253-256), though so far as I know this is the first reported sighting from the Canary Islands. Importation of larvae on a food plant would seem a likely source of origin for the Lanzarote population. Incidentally, I have also seen adults of this species in mainland Spain, in central Barcelona, Catalonia, during October 1997; and in Mijas, Andalucía during June 1998.

The other butterflies seen on Lanzarote were: *Elphinstonia charltonia* (Donzel), a few fresh examples in the arid terrain inland from Costa Tegui on most days, with adults repeatedly seen visiting the flowers of a small yellow flowered crucifer; *Vanessa atalanta* (L.), only two – one at Costa Tegui, 12 February, and one near El Islote in the centre of the island, 13 February; and *Cynthia cardui* (L.), common around Costa Tegui most days.

Adult moths were virtually absent in and around Costa Tegui. Examination of street and hotel lights revealed only a few Silver Y *Autographa gamma* L., though on 14 February, eight approximately half-grown larvae of *Hyles tithymali* (Bois.) were found on a single plant of a bushy *Euphorbia* sp. (probably *E. obtusifolia*) growing the sea front at Costa Tegui.— A. P. FOSTER, 23 The Dawneys, Crudwell, Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 9HE.